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To: Microsoft ATR
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Subject: questions about Microsoft Settlement

Hail!

It has been detailed in certain corners of the media that the US Department of Justice intends to punish Microsoft Corporation by having them provide computer hardware, software and consulting to schools at a cost to be deteremined by Microsoft.

Another part of the settlement is that Microsoft will reveal thier proprietary interfaces to commercial competitors.

My question is this: Doesn't putting Microsoft products and employees in front of schoolchildren make thier monopoly more ubiquitous, and strengthen thier monopoly?

Another question: Microsoft has used methods other than proprietary interfaces to keep commercial competitors from surviving. Microsoft didn't have a way to deal with the Open Source community, till this settlement was handed to them. Now, Microsoft can stop using industry standards and come up with thier own, implement proprietary interfaces for everything, and the government and businesses have to buy Microsoft products; Apple can't release a compatible product the same day as Microsoft because they won't have to release the interface specifications till release date. By the time Apple or Novell catch up, Microsoft can revoke product licenses and release another "enhanced" specification.

Poof! Instant Dictator! Give Bill Gates an aircraft carrier or he'll revoke the Pentagon's NT licenses!

The most logical conclusion would be to halt proprietary interfaces and use industry standard ones. That means that an old Amiga or Mac Classic can get mail from a Microsoft mail server. Need a new feature? Fine! Propose a standard that any programmer, commercial, home or in the open source community, can understand. Let people buy the best product, and upgrade after they outgrow older products.

Don't limit the publication of Microsoft's proprietary standards to commercial companies; they no longer constitute a credible competitor. I'm not telling you to shut down Microsoft and make everybody use Linux, I'm asking that Microsoft face the possibility of an entity as big as itself. This might even be to thier own advantage; they'd be forced to make the best products possible.

Here's the off-the-wall proposals:

1. Limit Microsoft to Fifty employees, and the salary of the highest paid executive can only be twice that of the janitorial and mailroom staffs. Base salary dictated by the need for everyone for food, clothing, shelter and transportation, and then demonstrated value to the company dictates the amount of additional compensation.

2. Microsoft speaks as though they value innovation, so support thier innovation. That was Microsoft BASIC for CP/M. Allow Microsoft to sell as many copies of this as they want, but they can't sell operating systems,

applications, or other programming languages. Just BASIC.

Now, don't the above arguments sound reasonable?

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